

February 22, 2011

**Testimony of Debra Carlucci
Related to Raised Bill No. 981
An Act Concerning the Placement of Young Children in Congregate Care Facilities**

To: The distinguished members of the Select Committee on Children.

I appreciate your time to read my testimony on the issues before you today.

My name is Debra Carlucci, a resident of Norwalk, Connecticut. My experience with Kids in Crisis is that of a Volunteer for 15 years, a member of the Board of Directors for six years and a long-time donor.

Thank you for your consideration to ensure children experiencing a crisis are given the attention they desperately need and are properly cared for. This letter is a summary of how the Kids in Crisis Agency is so important to our community. Children from all backgrounds are served by the agency and in many instances come with not only a horrific story to tell, but with their young siblings.

Kids in Crisis has served children from Fairfield County for over 30 years. It is a 24 hour emergency shelter for children ages 0-17. The 'campus' of Kids in Crisis consists of two home-like settings.

Children arrive in the midst of a crisis - neglect, homelessness, abuse and abandonment. My first experiences as a volunteer with Kids in Crisis was meeting a young girl, whose Aunt was trying to sell her. Another young boy witnessed the murder of his Mother; a group of siblings (ages 3-5) were relegated to live in the garden shed in the winter.

These children and thousands more served by Kids in Crisis were all referred to Kids in Crisis due to the severity of their situation. Children are provided with a safe haven and trained professionals. Each child is evaluated with a medical exam upon arrival. An education evaluation is completed and in most instances children are able to stay in their hometown schools. Although foster care is often the next steps to their lives, they are given the counseling and care they need prior to entering a private home.

The Kids in Crisis agency also assists with counseling both parents and their children in hopes of the families being re-united. Every situation is unique and cared for differently.

Unfortunately, thousands of children have walked through the doors of Kids in Crisis. Fortunately, there have been many success stories for children and teens and their siblings.

You have the ability to ensure sibling groups of children, who have nothing but one another, are kept together and receive the tender, loving, care I have witnessed at Kids in Crisis.

Sincerely,

Debra H. Carlucci